

SCIENCE, SCIENTISTS, AND THE UFO PROBLEM

WHAT DO SCIENTISTS SAY IN PUBLIC [ORTHODOX RESPONSE]

- The subject is all nonsense
- It is all hoaxes, hysteria, and misperceptions
- This leaves nothing worth investigating
- The Air Force has concluded there is nothing to it
- Condon showed that there is nothing to it

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WHAT DO SCIENTISTS SAY IN PRIVATE?

Survey of the American Astronomical Society, 1975

2611 questionnaires mailed, 1390 returned

Does the UFO problem deserve scientific study?

‘Certainly’ 23%

‘Probably’ 30%

‘Possibly’ 27%

‘Probably Not’ 17%

‘Certainly Not’ 3%

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WHAT HAVE SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANELS CONCLUDED?

American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, 1970

Joachim P. Kuettner (NOAA), Glenn A. Cato (TRW), Bernard N. Charles (Hughes Aircraft), Murray Dryer (NOAA), Howard D. Edwards (Georgia Tech), Paul McCready, Jr. (Meteorology Research), Andrew J. Masley (McDonnell Douglas), Robert Rados (GSFC, NASA), Donald M. Swingle (US Army Electronics), Vernon J. Zurich (NOAA)

Concerning the Condon Report, the Committee stated

“[We] did not find a basis in the report for [Condon’s] prediction that nothing of scientific value will come of further studies.” On the contrary, they found that “a phenomenon with such a high ratio of unexplained cases (about 30%) should arouse sufficient scientific curiosity to continue its study.”

It was the opinion of the committee that “the only promising approach [would be] a continuing, moderate-level effort with emphasis on improved data collection by objective means and on high-quality scientific analysis.”

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WHAT HAVE SCIENTIFIC REVIEW PANELS CONCLUDED?

Pocantico Panel convened by Sturrock at the request of Mr. Laurance S. Rockefeller, 1997

Dr. Thomas E. Holzer (National Center for Atmospheric Research), Co-Chair

Professor Von Eshleman (Electrical Engineering Dept., Stanford University), Co-Chair

Professor J.R. Jokipii (Planetary Sciences and Astronomy Dept., University of Arizona)

Dr. Francois Louange (Director, Fleximage, Paris)

Professor H.J. Melosh (Planetary Sciences and Astronomy Dept., University of Arizona)

Professor James J. Papike (Director, Institute of Meteoritics, University of New Mexico)

Dr. Guenther Reitz, M.D. (Institute for Aerospace Medicine, Cologne)

Professor Charles R. Tolbert (Astronomy Dept., University of Virginia)

Professor Bernard Veyret (Biomagnetics Laboratory, University of Bordeaux)

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Pocantico Panel

Investigators:

Dr. Richard F. Haines (Los Altos, California) - Photographic Evidence, and Aircraft Equipment Anomalies

Dr. Illobrand von Ludwiger (Feldkirchen, Germany) - Radar Data

Dr. Mark Rodeghier (Center for UFO Studies) - Automobile Engine Anomalies

Mr. John F. Schuessler (Houston, Texas) - Injuries to Witnesses

Dr. Erling Strand (Ostfeld, Norway) - Video and Spectroscopic Data

Professor Michael D. Swords (Eastern Michigan University) - Inertial Anomalies

Dr. Jacques Vallee (San Francisco) - Energy and Materials Data

M. Jean-Jacques Velasco (Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales, Toulouse) - Radar, Ground and Vegetation Data

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Pocantico Panel - Conclusions and Recommendations

- The UFO problem is not a simple one, and it is unlikely that there is any simple universal answer.
- Whenever there are unexplained observations, there is the possibility that scientists will learn something new by studying those observations.
- Studies should concentrate on cases which include as much independent physical evidence as possible and strong witness testimony.
- Some form of regular contact between the UFO community and physical scientists could be productive.

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Pocantico Panel - Conclusions and Recommendations

- It is desirable that there be institutional support for research in this area.
- The GEPAN/SEPRA project of CNES in France has since 1977 provided a valuable model for a modest but effective organization for collecting and analyzing UFO observations and related data
- Reflecting on evidence presented at the workshop that some witnesses of UFO events have suffered radiation-type injuries, the panel draws the attention of the medical community to a possible health risk associated with UFO events.

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Pocantico Panel - Possible Factors Contributing to Scientists' Lack of Attention to the Problem

- a. There are no public funds to support research into this issue;
- b. There may be an assumption that there are no data worth examining;
- c. There may be a belief that the Colorado Project and the Condon Report effectively settled this question; and
- d. The topic may be perceived as being in some sense “not respectable.”

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AIR FORCE - POSSIBLE ACTION

Implement the following March 1966 recommendations of the O'Brien Committee
[the Ad Hoc Committee of the Air Force Scientific Advisory Board, Chairman
Dr. Brian O'Brien]

- Contracts should be negotiated with a few selected universities ...
- One university or one not-for-profit organization should be selected to coordinate the work of the teams ...

Perhaps 100 sightings a year might be subjected to this close study, and ... possibly an average of 10 man days might be required per sighting... The information provided by such a program might bring to light new facts of scientific value ...

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CONGRESS - POSSIBLE ACTION

Increase the Budget of the National Science Foundation by two percent

This increase is to be designated for the scientific study of topics of wide public interest, that are not already being studied adequately by the scientific community

Apart from this requirement, the administration of these funds is to be identical to that of present NSF funds

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UNIVERSITIES - POSSIBLE ACTION

Encourage and support the study of topics that do not fit neatly into established scientific disciplines.

Encourage and support the study of topics that are of wide public interest but are not currently studied - or are not adequately studied - in universities.

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EDITORS OF SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS - POSSIBLE ACTION

Accept for publication articles that present competent study of topics that do not fit neatly into established scientific disciplines.

Accept for publication articles that present competent study of topics of wide public interest that are not currently discussed - or are not adequately discussed - in scientific journals.

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SCIENTISTS - POSSIBLE ACTION

- Pay some attention to topics of wide public interest.
- Do not pontificate about topics of which you are ignorant.
- Do not dismiss phenomena on the basis of Twentieth Century physics.
- Rather test Twentieth Century physics against new phenomena.
- **Be curious!**

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SCIENTISTS - POSSIBLE ACTION - WHERE TO BEGIN?

- Read the Condon Report - from back to front!
- Study Air Force reports from projects Sign, Grudge, Blue Book
- Study files from the French program - GEPAN/SEPRA.
- Study a few classic cases:
 - Lakenheath, 1956
 - RB-47 Case, 1957
 - Mansfield, Ohio, 1973
 - Iran, 1976
 - Cash-Landrum, 1980
 - Trans-en-Provence, 1981
- Read relevant journals:
 - Journal of UFO Studies
 - Journal of Scientific Exploration

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TO BEGIN SERIOUS RESEARCH, ACQUIRE

CATALOGS

- T. Phillips, 1975, Physical Traces Associated with UFO Sightings (561 Cases)
- M. Rodeghier, 1981, UFO Reports Involving Vehicle Interference (441 Cases)
- R.F. Haines, 1992, Fifty-Six Aircraft Pilot Sightings involving Electromagnetic Effects

DATABASES

- L. Hatch, 1999, *U* Database (computer catalog of over 5,000 cases)
- CNES, France, 2002, SEBRA Database (computer catalog of about 4,000 reports)
- CUFOSS, 2002 UFOCAT (possibly 100,000 cases, including 13,000 from Blue Book)

[By comparison - I can find a database of only about 100 meteor events, and no database of ball-lighting events.]